

The Regional Municipality of Durham  
Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness

**COVID-19 Homelessness Response Network**

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020

In Attendance:

|                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Erin Valant             | Region of Durham                  |
| Stephanie Ross          | Region of Durham                  |
| Megan Hueser-Shields    | Region of Durham                  |
| Alyx Riddell            | Region of Durham                  |
| Alan Robbins            | Region of Durham                  |
| Kelly O'Brien           | Region of Durham                  |
| Councillor Bob Chapman  | City of Oshawa                    |
| Alyssa Skan             | Cornerstone Community Association |
| Rob Brglez              | Cornerstone Community Association |
| Sam Kwan                | VHA Home HealthCare               |
| Maureen Bandola         | John Howard Society               |
| Marla Walters           | CFOC                              |
| Mona Emond              | North House                       |
| Vanessa Bilenduke-Guppy | CDCD                              |
| Adrianna Vanderneut     | DYS                               |
| Jackie McKinnon         | Bethesda House                    |
| Ryan Rayner             | DRPS                              |
| Alanna Burke            | Lakeridge Health                  |
| Doreen Hume McKenna     | DMHS                              |
| Clarence Keesman        | The Refuge                        |
| Tracey Harding          | CMHA Durham                       |
| Alan Perrin             | Gate 3:16                         |

**COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Response**

VAW operator updates

- Since March 13, 2020 attention has been on preventing an outbreak.
- Discussion regarding the decision to not expand by using hotel spaces.
  - Women and families are more secure in the shelter as they needed security, not just a bed. The most dangerous time for a woman is when they leave.
- Clients are now being advised to transition from shelter if they can find alternate accommodation.

Shelter operator updates

- Cornerstone: Reached capacity over the weekend.

- Discussion regarding operating under the Cold Weather Alert Protocol to expand overflow to hotel spaces.
- Durham Youth Services: Success with diversion program has allowed for lower than average occupancy rate.
- Muslim Welfare Home: Shelter has reduced capacity within each room to ensure physical distancing.

#### Hotel isolation updates

- Discussion regarding staffing resources located at hotel to support clients.
  - One hotel room will be dedicated for staff on site.
  - Working to coordinate on-site nursing and PSW supports.
- Lakeridge Health will be setting up virtual supports for RAAM services
  - Virtual supports for mental health and counselling
  - iPads have been purchased for support
- Non-emergency medical transportation is available to safely transport clients requiring isolation to the hotel isolation spaced.

#### Camp Samac facility update

- Warming centre operators Christian Faith Outreach Centre and First Light Foundation of Hope will be co-leading project, moving warming centre locations there and can increase capacity.
- Intent of program is to provide supports to people to be able to maintain isolation if they are not able to. There will be 24/7 on-site supports, supervision, food services, etc.
- Will be able to serve about 40 people on site to maintain good physical distancing.
- Requests to committee regarding donations.
  - Looking for daytime programs and activities. Able to use outdoor space with picnic benches to maintain good physical distancing.
  - Discussion regarding possible RentSmart course, possibility of redeploying staff to facilitate workshops a couple days a week.
  - Looking for donations of crafts, colouring books, books, pencil crayons, word searches, or any ideas of games for one person to promote social distancing.
  - Requesting donations of hygiene kits.
- Laptops will be available for virtual check ins for viewing units, mental health supports, etc. Coordination of internet is underway.
- The intent is to make this a space where people will want to stay during the day to minimize movement in the community throughout daytime hours.
- Discussion regarding best way to provide donations.
- Camp Samac will be setting up snow fencing to indicate where people are able and not able to go on property.

## **COVID-19 Unsheltered Response**

- Whitby Iroquois sports centre is open for transportation workers. The location has offered use of shower facilities by appointment if needed.
  - This location will also be offering outdoor toilets and handwashing stations outdoors.
- Pickering Dunbarton Indoor Pool Facility is anticipated to be operational by the end of the week for washroom and shower access. Security and cleaning services are now set up.
- Ajax Community Centre has provided use of pad 3 in the arena.
  - VHA has offered to do outreach for this location. They will do screening, service navigation, coordination on-site.
  - Request for donations of items: shampoo, soap, towels, clean clothing donations, any agencies able to offer laundry for towels. Also looking for an outdoor tent.
  - Thought to provide community update sheets to location to post so clients have knowledge of what services are currently available. VHA has offered to print copies.
- Oshawa location's shower repairs and laundry repairs almost completed.
  - Also started moving in health supports that will be on site (equipment). Official launch date will be as soon as most important things get running.
  - The location already offers meals and access to washrooms.
- The Refuge is looking into the logistics of the portable washroom facility.
  - Discussion on frequency of servicing required to keep facilities clean and maintained.

## **COVID-19 Relief Response**

- CDCD has not received the feedback requested from DACH regarding changes needed to the Housing Stability Program guidelines to better respond to COVID-19.
- CDCD will continue to work on this internally and present recommendations to DACH at the next meeting.

## **Funding**

- Community Response Fund: to make funds available to non-profit organizations in Durham Region supporting homeless residents during COVID-19.
  - Application will go live this week.

## **Movement between Regions**

- Discussion on increasing numbers of residents leaving Toronto to access shelter space in Durham
  - VAW sector getting referrals from Toronto. Not supposed to be getting cross transfer. Primarily advised not take cross-community clients from health department.
  - Cornerstone continues to see movement from Toronto as usual. They provide transportation assistance to help people re-access their community.
  - First Light Foundation of Hope has also seen Toronto residents looking to access shelter supports in Durham.
  - Individuals are stating that they feel there is more services available to them here. Wasn't specified as to what services but thoughts are medical attention and meals.

## **Agency Updates**

- There have been many agencies in our community making great efforts to assist. Great collaboration & innovation is being seen across Durham.

## **Next Meeting**

- Meetings will be scheduled every Monday from 1:00pm-3:00pm
- Send any agenda items to [Alyxandra.Riddell@durham.ca](mailto:Alyxandra.Riddell@durham.ca) by end of day Thursday to be added to the following Monday's agenda